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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARKET NEWS REVIEWS

Week ending March 23, 1945

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Asparagus - Weather conditions and seasonal variations are reflected in this season's shipments of asparagus from the producing areas. Total carlot movement to date, including express, are: U. S. 71 cars, California 60 cars, compared with the 1944 movement of 110 cars from the U. S. and 109 from California. California is behind schedule this year, and South Carolina is slightly ahead.

As harvesting and shipments have increased, wholesale prices have declined. Top wholesale prices were down to 36 cents per pound at the close of the week, with the range on the western markets at 30 cents to 36 cents for Extra Fancy stock.

Carrots - Movement of bunched and topped stock from California and Arizona increase toward the end of the week, and fob prices remained at \$2.25 per crate for medium to large stock in crates. Demand was not so strong, and the market was unsettled. Wholesale prices on Imperial Valley stock on the western markets ranged \$2.75 to \$3.25 in the southwest and \$4.00 to \$4.25 in the northwest at the close of the week.

Potatoes - Maine and the Red River Valley supplies have been moving rapidly and in larger quantities the past week. Supplies from Idaho have continually decreased. Prices have remained at ceiling, and as yet shipments have not reflected the usual end of the month "slacking off". Total U. S. shipments to date this season are: 235,622 cars, last season to same date 252,094 cars.

<u>Shipments compared:</u> (carloads)	<u>Idaho</u>	<u>Maine</u>	<u>United States</u>
Past week	441	2,519	5,898
Previous week	694	2,319	6,829

Strawberries - Portland, Oregon received its first strawberries of the season from Louisiana, Friday morning March 23, the wholesale price for the 132 crates of 24 baskets was \$7.41 each per crate, almost 31 cents per basket.

DAIRY & POULTRY PRODUCTS

Butter - Demand on the western markets for civilian trade was well supplied the past week by increased supplies. However, civilian demand has been greatly reduced and appears about one-third less than for the corresponding period last year. Ceiling prices prevailed during the week.

Eggs - Civilian demand, in the Western Region, has continued at a high level, approximately 30 percent above that of last year at the same time. Supplies were under the combined civilian and government demand. Movement into cold-storage has been slow. At the opening of the past week holdings on the Pacific Coast were 666,468 cases, approximately 32 percent of the holdings last year at the same time.



Poultry - Supplies for civilian trade remained below demand. Most markets on the Pacific Coast were cleared early each day, and in many places long consumer lines at poultry counters indicated the tone of demand. Prices remained at ceiling, and dealers were making increased efforts to obtain supplies.

Throughout the U. S., orders at hatcheries for chicks had increased during the past two months, but were still almost 10 percent under last year at this time.

#### LIVESTOCK AND MEATS

Cattle - Movement into the four western markets again increased during the past week, and a total of 22,205 head were received, 15 percent above the previous week, and 75 percent above the corresponding week a year ago. On the twelve principal markets 236,500 head were received the past week, 6 percent above those for the previous week, and 23 percent above those of the same week a year ago.

Prices in the northwest advanced on some lots of good to choice as much as 25 cents, while in the southwest they declined 25 to 50 cents during the week. Low top price established for the week on good to choice fed steers was \$15.50, and high top price was \$17.25. Last year for the same week the top range was \$15.00 to \$16.35.

Hogs - Receipts on all the western markets continued to decline the past week. On the four western markets 8,996 head were received, 94 percent of the previous week. On the twelve principal markets 225,200 head were received, a 6 percent increase over the previous week, but 55 percent less than for the same period last year.

Demand continued well above available supplies, and ceiling prices prevailed.

Sheep - Shipments of sheep to the four western markets the past week declined to 14,091 head, 80 percent of those for the previous week, and 10 percent above the corresponding a year ago. 228,300 head were received on the twelve principal markets the past week, 8 percent more than the previous week and the corresponding week last year.

Recent weather reports indicate that sheep pasture conditions along the Pacific Coast are sufficiently improved to improve quality and weights of marketable sheep the last week of March and into April.

#### GRAIN PRODUCTS

Wheat - Warmer weather and sufficient moisture in most of the winter wheat belt has resulted in good growth and improved prospects for the 1945 crop. March reported planting intentions indicate that the 1945-46 acreage will be about the same as the 1944-45 acreage. The market in the west was slightly lower at the close of the past week than at the opening, resulting in a one cent drop from the previous week.

Alfalfa - Western market conditions remained about the same as for the previous week with demand active on limited offerings. In contrast increased offerings in the middle-west caused declines in prices in the Kansas City and Platte Valley Nebraska areas. Rail facilities being limited also reduced offerings.

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